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Subject: EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines - WEDNESDAY - October 16, 2019

EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

Palmerton officials concerned about EPA drilling

TIMES NEWS

A United States Environmental Protection Agency Superfund site in Palmerton is closing in on the last steps of its remediation, but it doesn't have support from borough authorities. The over 30-year project is set to conduct its final phase, a remedial investigation that would require drilling near wells at the former New Jersey Zinc East Plant. The drilling, combined with soil collection and surface water testing, will assess how deep — if at all — heavy metal contamination has seeped into the ground. But drilling at the plant could contaminate public water sources close by, the Palmerton Municipal Authority contended at its meeting earlier this month. Borough council could draw a similar conclusion, as members determined in September that they'd wait for the municipal authority's ruling before making their own. Still, even if the borough and municipal authority voice opposition, the EPA doesn't need their permission to go ahead with the drilling. "They're never going away here," council President Terry Costenbader said at a meeting in late September. Back in the 1980s, EPA identified Palmerton and surrounding areas as a Superfund site. The borough had been contaminated by heavy metals, the national authority ruled, raising health

Mountain Valley Pipeline agrees to pay Virginia \$2.15 million for environmental violations

VIRGINIA MERCURY

(Friday) Virginia and Mountain Valley Pipeline have resolved a lawsuit brought by the state against the company for environmental violations that caused significant erosion in the southwestern part of the commonwealth, with the natural gas pipeline developer agreeing to pay a \$2.15 million civil penalty. The payment was described by Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring as "one of the most significant financial penalties ever imposed in Virginia for this kind of case." Under the terms of the consent decree, the Henrico Circuit Court, where Virginia's original suit was filed, assumes supervision of Mountain Valley Pipeline's compliance with state environmental laws, a move that broadens the range of consequences the company will face in the event of violations. Among other provisions, the agreement also requires Mountain Valley Pipeline to remediate prior violations and conduct, at the company's own expense, ongoing monitoring of erosion and impacts to fisheries and wildlife within the construction area. All work must be further reviewed

by independent third-party auditors. Notably, the agreement leaves the door open for the state to impose further fines for future violations and to assess those penalties through “an expedited process.”

Toxic PCBs linger in schools; EPA, lawmakers fail to act

WASHINGTON POST

CHICAGO — The Environmental Protection Agency and lawmakers have quietly abandoned efforts to rid schools of toxic PCBs, leaving districts — especially in poor areas — with a difficult choice: Look for the long-banned chemicals, which could trigger a costly cleanup, or simply clean their buildings as well as possible. Many older buildings have caulk, ceiling tiles, floor adhesives and paint made with PCBs, sometimes at levels far higher than allowed by law. And millions of PCB-containing fluorescent light ballasts probably remain in older schools and day care centers, where they can leak, smolder and catch fire. Yet the Environmental Protection Agency never attempted to determine the scope of PCB contamination or assess potential health risks because of a lack of funding, political pressure and pushback from industry and education groups, according to dozens of interviews and thousands of pages of documents examined by The Associated Press.

Pentagon inspector general to review PFAS concerns

GREENWIRE

The Pentagon's internal watchdog has committed to reviewing the Department of Defense's use of toxic chemicals at military sites. The evaluation comes after Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.), along with about 30 lawmakers of a bipartisan task force, sent a July 25 letter to the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General asking for a review of DOD's response to the highly toxic chemicals linked to water contamination near many military bases. The military uses per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, in firefighting foam because of its effectiveness in putting out diesel fires. But studies have linked PFAS to health problems such as thyroid issues and some cancers. "We reviewed your July request and decided to initiate an evaluation related to PFAS concerns," Michael Zola, the Pentagon's assistant inspector general for legislative affairs and communications, wrote to lawmakers in an Oct. 7 letter

Outreach strategies cropping up to help growing number of female farmers

Studies find that women are more open to conservation, stewardship practices

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

One of the biggest changes to the face of agriculture and forestry these days in Chesapeake Bay states is women. That new demographic is leading some environmental groups and government agencies to launch new strategies for engaging female decision makers in projects that help water quality. The unprecedented numbers tell part of the tale. Approximately 59% of farmland in Maryland is now owned or co-owned by women, or a woman makes decisions on the farm. Women hold those roles on 54% of farmland in Virginia; 55% in Pennsylvania, 53% in West Virginia and 60% in New York, according to the federal 2017 Census of Agriculture. During the 5-year survey period, the number of male farmers declined by 1.7% nationwide while female ag producers leaped by 27%. According to the American Farmland Trust, the trend toward more female management of farms is likely to increase. Over the next 20 years, about 70% of the nation's farmland is expected to change hands,....

Two shipping companies plead guilty to hiding oil pollution

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Two shipping companies incorporated in Liberia pleaded guilty in Delaware to

presenting falsified documents to the U.S. Coast Guard to hide oil pollution caused by one of their cargo ships. A U.S. Department of Justice statement says Nederland Shipping Company and Chartworld Shipping Company also pleaded guilty Tuesday to not notifying the coast guard of the M/V Nederland Reefer's hazardous condition after a hole developed in the vessel's bilge water tank, compromising the hull's integrity. The companies must pay a \$1.8 million fine. The Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships requires oily bilge water to be treated before being released into the sea. Inspectors found that chief engineer Vasileios Mazarakis was tricking an oil monitoring device, releasing untreated waste into the ocean and falsifying the ship's oil record book.

PENNSYLVANIA

WHYY PHILADELPHIA

Faulty, old pipe caused PES refinery explosion, sending a bus-size piece of debris flying across Schuylkill A piece of pipe, long overdue for replacement, spilled highly combustible hydrocarbons mixed with a dangerous chemical and caused the devastating explosions and fire at the Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery in the early morning of June 21. One explosion sent a 38,000-pound vessel — about the same weight as a firetruck — across the Schuylkill River, where it landed on the waterway's banks, near the company's tank farm. PES estimates the incident released about 676,000 pounds of hydrocarbons, most of it — about 608,000 pounds — burned in the fire and explosions. Those are some of the details in a report released Wednesday by the federal Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board. The report also says an estimated 3,271 pounds of the dangerous hydrofluoric acid was released into the atmosphere, while the refinery's water spray system contained about 1,968 pounds of HF. The release of the chemical did not cause any injuries. City officials had previously reported they did not detect any HF escaping.

One tenth of a mile: What Philly looks like from above

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL

Coastal Storm To Pack A Punch In Lehigh Valley, Heavy Rains, Strong Winds A powerful coastal storm developing across the mid-Atlantic is expected to produce heavy rainfall and localized flooding in the Lehigh Valley. Additionally, strong winds may cause some tree damage and power outages through Thursday, forecasters say. Rain is expected to spread across the area late this morning or early this afternoon, with significantly heavier precipitation in the late afternoon and evening hours. The National Weather Service says there may be some thunder as well, with maximum temperatures expected to range from the upper 50s in the Poconos to the lower 70s well south of the Lehigh Valley.

WASHINGTON OBSERVER-REPORTER

Op-Ed: Shale Gas Development Follows A Legacy Forged In Steel You probably are familiar with the saying, "You can't see the forest for the trees." What you may not know is that every forest, especially the temperate forests of our region, has an often-overlooked area known as the "understory." The understory is the underlying layer of vegetation growing between the ground and forest canopy . . . the beautiful tree cover that is on the cusp of bursting into the vibrant colors of fall. The understory gives the forest its beauty and strength. Human understories are places of beauty and strength as well. For me, Southwestern Pennsylvania has never been defined by lines on a map; never been defined by Allegheny, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Washington and Westmoreland counties. We are not defined by Marcellus Shale. Southwestern Pennsylvania has always been, and always will be, defined by us, the people who live, work and play here. Names on the maps are the canopy, and we are the understory of our region.

PA ENVIRONMENT DIGEST BLOG (By PA DEP)

Nominations Now Being Accepted For 2020 Governor's Awards For Environmental Excellence [PaEN] With the aim of showcasing the best of the best among Pennsylvania's environmental stewards, the Wolf Administration invites all Pennsylvanians who've recently worked on successful environmental projects to submit a nomination for the 2020 Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence, the state's top environmental honor. The deadline for nominations is December 17. "The dedicated volunteers who take action to restore or protect their environment, whether in their own neighborhood or across the state, are a significant force for good in Pennsylvania," said Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "It's impossible to imagine Pennsylvania without their contributions to the quality of our land, air, and water, and it's an honor to spotlight their accomplishments each spring."

2019 PA Women's Agricultural Network Symposium Set For Dec. 18 At Temple University [PaEN] Join the Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network December 18 for their Annual Symposium at the Howard Gittis Student Center at Temple University, 1755 N. 13th Street in Philadelphia from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Symposium will feature keynote speakers Audra Mulkern, creator of The Female Farmer Project, and Leah Penniman, co-director of Soul Fire Farm and author of Farming While Black. The feature sessions will include seed keeping, herbal medicine, recipes and growing traditions, land liberation and urban agriculture, equity and actionable research, and more! The day before the symposium (December 17).

StateImpact PA, WITF Invite Public To A Retro Report Discussion On Climate Change, Nuclear Energy, More Oct. 23 In Harrisburg [PaEN] From invasive species to the TMI shutdown, some of Pennsylvania's top environmental headlines have roots in historical events. Join WITF and StateImpact Pennsylvania October 23 from 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. at the WITF Public Media Center in Harrisburg as Smart Talk's Scott LaMar hosts a RETRO REPORT on PBS preview screening and expert panel discussion on current environmental challenges in the Commonwealth. Video clips from the national series will be paired with local clips produced by other member stations also taking part in the RETRO REPORT project.

THE PROGRESS

Clearfield Municipal Authority To Sell Nitrogen Credits For \$30,000 Clearfield Municipal Authority voted to authorize the sale of its 2019 nitrogen credits for approximately \$30,000 at its meeting yesterday afternoon. The board voted to sell approximately 8,000 pounds of nitrogen credits at \$3.50 per pound — netting it approximately \$30,000, according to CMA engineer Jim Balliet of Gwin, Dobson & Foreman of Altoona. Balliet said they were expecting to make about \$25,000 from the sale of the credits.

PENN LIVE

Sauro: Storm water fee, plan to reduce sewage in Susquehanna River scrutinized by Harrisburg officials — opinion For officials at Capital Region Water, the solution seems clear — by adding a new fee to residents' sewer and water bills, a dedicated funding source will be created to pay for long overdue improvements to Harrisburg's stormwater system. They've been saying it for months. What they revealed Tuesday was that their current plan to make those improvements will mean the system, which regularly spews raw sewage into the Susquehanna River and Paxton Creek, won't meet clean water expectations for another 65 years.

KJZZ.COM

EnergySolutions Acquires Accident-Damaged TMI Unit 2 Reactor For Decontamination (KUTV) — EnergySolutions has signed a contract to acquire all licenses and assets of Three Mile Island. Under this agreement, the facility would be transferred to a subsidiary of EnergySolutions known as TMI-2 Solutions, LLC, and also facilitates applications to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities for approval of the transfer, followed by the

decommissioning of Unit-2 at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station (TMI-2) located near Middleton, Pennsylvania.

PITTSBURGH BUSINESS TIMES

ExxonMobil Scouting For Potential Ethane Plant Site In Beaver County

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Op-Ed: Need To Focus On Health, Not Money, In Managing Nuclear Power Reactors

Hokey: Small Earthquake Detected Near Washington, PA

Top EPA Enforcement Official Patrick D. Traylor Joins V&E in Washington, D.C. (Tuesday).... Patrick D. Traylor, the former Deputy Assistant Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's...

Research and Markets via Business Wire News Releases - The "Novel Water Sustainability Technologies: Key Projects and Opportunities, Financing, and Venture Capital, Transactions and Trends" report has been added to ResearchAndMarkets.com's offering. The scope of this report is broad and covers various technologies in sustainable water management across various end users. Novel water sustainability technologies are broken down by technology and end user. Revenue forecasts from 2018-2024 are given for each technology, application and end user, with estimated values derived from the revenue of manufacturers total revenues. The report also includes a discussion of major players across each technology. It explains the major drivers and regional dynamics of global novel water sustainability technologies and current trends within the industry. The report concludes with a special focus on the vendor landscape and includes detailed profiles of major vendors in the global novel water sustainability technologies. The Report Includes: 28 data tables and 64 additional tables - An overview of the global market for novel water sustainability technologies....

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

DEP Accepting Applications For Environmental Project Awards The state is accepting applications for the 2020 Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence from those who participated or led an environmental stewardship project, as well as all schools, nonprofits, businesses, farms, and government agencies. People or organizations that conducted an environmental project may also be nominated. Applications for the 2020 Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence will be accepted until Dec. 17 on projects that were completed by Oct. 15.

WBOC2 -TV

Reservoir Analysis Market and Its Key Opportunities and Challenges

reservoir vary from conventional reservoir. The well stimulation (i.e. fracking) and completion technology need to be separately designed...

TRIBUNE DEMOCRAT

Bottle Works, Bank Collaborate On Greenspace Naming Rights In Johnstown A western Pennsylvania bank with several locations in Johnstown has secured naming rights to a new greenspace and parking lot in the city. Bottle Works, 411 Third Ave., recently secured a multi-year naming rights deal with First National Bank to begin in 2020. The deal comes as Bottle Works completes its second capital project. The new greenspace and parking lot, which is located directly across from the Bottle Works, will now be known as the First National Bank Pop Plaza at the Bottle Works.

THE PROGRESS - CLEARFIELD

CMA votes to sell nitrogen credits for \$30,000

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Stiffer traffic penalties sought by bicyclists won't make streets safer. But they might get them. There's a slew of bicycle-related proposals coming before the D.C. Council. The goal is to improve safety, but the impact on drivers could be costly.

Md. panel approves new school funding formula that calls for more money from governments Local governments, starting in 2030, would pay a total of \$1.2 billion more a year for schools under the proposed formula proposed by a panel charged with ensuring that every child can get a world-class education. It also calls on the state to raise its education spending by 37 percent

In wealthy D.C. areas, praise and criticism for mayor's call to increase affordable housing Several community leaders and residents in wealthy parts of the District said it's easier to support the plan of Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) in principle than specific projects, programs or zoning changes that would make it a reality.

WASHINGTON TIMES

This story ran in dozens of regional outlets: Toxic PCBs linger in schools; EPA, lawmakers fail to actmany of those schools have other environmental problems - including lead, asbestos and mold - that could be higher priorities. So...

S Carolina fines Virginia energy company for water pollution COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) - South Carolina regulators have fined a Virginia-based energy company for allowing sediment runoff from a pipeline project to pollute drinking water sources. The State reported Monday that investigators recently culminated a monthslong investigation by fining Dominion Energy \$4,200. State regulators say the company illegally discharged sediment along a natural gas pipeline route between Spartanburg and Lake Greenwood that eventually spilled muddy water into the South Tyger river. The newspaper reports a Department of Health and Environmental Control spokesman has said the pollution forced a water utility district to buy water from other sources because sediment was clogging intake pipes. In state documents, Dominion said a contractor it hired was responsible for the spill and promised to improve procedures. The Health Department says it doesn't think the pollution harmed aquatic life.

Dairy expansion nixed, citing climate change

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) - A Minnesota appeals court has ordered the state's pollution regulators to reconsider their decision to issue a permit for...

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Two shipping companies plead guilty to hiding oil pollution WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Two shipping companies incorporated in Liberia pleaded guilty in Delaware to presenting falsified documents to the U.S. Coast Guard to hide oil pollution caused by one of their cargo ships. A U.S. Department of Justice statement says Nederland Shipping Company and Chartworld Shipping Company also pleaded guilty Tuesday to not notifying the coast guard of the M/V Nederland Reefer's hazardous condition after a hole developed in the vessel's bilge water tank, compromising the hull's integrity. The companies must pay a \$1.8 million fine. The Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships requires oily bilge water to be treated before being released into the sea. Inspectors found that chief engineer Vasileios Mazarakis was tricking an oil monitoring device, releasing untreated waste into the ocean and falsifying the ship's oil record book.

Heavy rain, high winds expected in Kent, Sussex

DOVER — Impending rain showers dampened some festivities around the state today, as the Milford Community Parade was canceled tonight as was the Capital City Farmer's Market in Dover this afternoon. The National Weather Service (NWS) is calling for rain, with some thunderstorms also possible, after 3 today. Some of the storms could produce heavy

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE-MAIL

Governor's dream workforce and recovery program launches officially ELEANOR — Working with the first men to find recovery at Recovery Point of Huntington — when it was The Healing Place — West Virginia Office of Drug Control Policy Director Bob Hansen saw how big the hurdle was to transition from recovery in treatment to recovery in the world. "What happens next was the big issue," Hansen said Tuesday at a celebration of Gov. Jim Justice's Jobs & Hope program, also known as "Jim's Dream." "We would talk to folks about going back to your home community and the answer was no, because we'd be looking to going back to the same environments. It was a question mark and a gap. Here they are working so hard on their recovery and then what? This is part of the answer."

As 2020 heats up, WV candidates touch on environmental issues

(Sunday) Only a few months from the next legislative session, and as 2020 elections heat up, state leaders and candidates discussed environmental issues Saturday afternoon. Environmental leaders, plus people vying for office, gathered in Charleston for the West Virginia Environmental Council's 30th anniversary meeting at Coonskin Park, where they delved into priorities for the 2020 session.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE JOURNAL

Airports across WV awarded state grants, federal funding CHARLESTON — Kicked off in a series of events attended by the governor, Gov. Jim Justice announced Monday the awarding of more than \$677,000 in grants to airports throughout the state. "Airports are our lifeblood — they're the number one thing when it comes to growth in our communities," Justice said. "And so, what we've tried to do, is we've tried to target our grant amounts so that we can then obtain additional federal amounts. That could turn this into big dollars and make things happen within our own state, within our own facilities." The grant funding comes from Special Revenue,

provided by the Aviation Fuel Tax, according to a release from Justice's office. The grants will be awarded through the West Virginia Aeronautics Commission.

ASSOCIATED PRESS - WEST VIRGINIA

Businesses in 3 WV counties eligible for disaster loans WHEELING, W.Va. (AP) — The U.S. Small Business Administration says small businesses in three West Virginia counties are eligible for economic injury disaster loans as a result of excessive rain and flooding earlier this year. The agency said Brooke, Hancock and Ohio counties in the Northern Panhandle are eligible because they're contiguous to one or more primary counties in Ohio. The loans are available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and private nonprofit organizations. The program is available to businesses or organizations that had financial losses due to excessive rain and flooding from Jan. 1 through Aug. 20

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Crab violations are plentiful in Maryland, none more so than undersized possession The Maryland Department of Natural Resources reported 2,341 crab-related violations across the state from 2013 through 2018. Which violations were the most plentiful?

Ellicott City flood plan looks to enhance green space, pedestrian-friendly measures The five focuses of the Ellicott City master flood plan were discussed at a public meeting Tuesday night.

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

Outreach strategies cropping up to help growing number of female farmers *Studies find that women are more open to conservation, stewardship practices* One of the biggest changes to the face of agriculture and forestry these days in Chesapeake Bay states is women. That new demographic is leading some environmental groups and government agencies to launch new strategies for engaging female decision makers in projects that help water quality. The unprecedented numbers tell part of the tale. Approximately 59% of farmland in Maryland is now owned or co-owned by women, or a woman makes decisions on the farm. Women hold those roles on 54% of farmland in Virginia; 55% in Pennsylvania, 53% in West Virginia and 60% in New York, according to the federal 2017 Census of Agriculture.

CHESAPEAKE BAY MAGAZINE

Bay Foundation forced to leave disappearing island

Bay restoration to get \$32 million in matched grants A significant influx of money is coming to the Chesapeake Bay, in the form of \$13 million in federal grants. And matched contributions will bring the total to almost \$32 million in clean water support. The 47 grants come from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, and will go towards restoration and conservation efforts in all six Bay watershed states and Washington D.C. Funds will be used to engage farmers,

homeowners, churches, buildings, and local governments to improve waterways. Grant recipients were just announced at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish and School in Baltimore County (in the Middle River watershed), which got stormwater and green infrastructure upgrades thanks to a 2017 Stewardship Grant.

The Virginia Mercury

Large algae blooms are spreading in the James. Blame the drought.

Nottingham MD

Maryland Department of the Environment releases draft plan to achieve climate goals

The (Hollywood, Md.) Bay Net

Maryland Releases Draft Plan to Achieve Climate Goals

National Fisherman

East Coast project to boost oyster breeding

Maryland Department of the Environment

Maryland releases draft plan to achieve climate goals

Maryland Department of the Environment

Department Names First Fish Maryland Master Angler

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Md.)

Maryland panel recommends new \$4B school funding formula ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — A Maryland panel on education has voted to recommend updating the state's funding formula between the state and local governments to phase in a major increase in money for schools. The work group is recommending a state commission phase in new spending that will reach about \$4 billion a year for K-12 a decade from now. Under the proposal, the state would contribute about \$2.8 billion and local governments would contribute \$1.2 billion in fiscal year 2030. The recommendations will go to the full Kirwan Commission. It has been working on investing in early childhood education and increasing teacher pay. It also has focused on implementing rigorous curricula, providing more support to struggling schools and creating accountability for underperformance. The commission will make recommendations this year to lawmakers.

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

Opinion: J. Winston Porter column: Our leading clean energy source(Monday)It would be hard to imagine more damage to the U.S. economy than banning “fracking,” which is used to produce natural gas and oil.

Unfortunately, a number of federal and state politicians now say they would attempt to disallow such fracking. Why is there a senseless attack on fracking, which is the most important technology in U.S. natural gas and oil production? Fortunately, proposed bans on fracking have run into determined opposition from businesses, industry groups and states that rely on oil and gas outputs. Drilling for oil and gas in shale fields reversed the production decline in the United States and upended the global oil market once dominated by OPEC. What’s more, the technology for shale production keeps getting better. Those politicians who doubt the effectiveness of fracking need only look at the numbers for U.S. oil and gas production and the huge investment in pipelines and

other infrastructure. Basically, the use of fracking to produce oil and gas is lowering energy costs, creating new jobs, boosting domestic manufacturing and delivering environmental benefits such as major reductions in carbon emissions.

VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE

Student-developed app will help public remove derelict crab traps

VIRGINIA MERCURY

Large algae blooms are spreading in the James. Blame the drought. The fall foliage may be dull, but parts of the James River are slightly brighter this October thanks to the “flash drought” that has gripped much of the Southeast for the past month. East of Hopewell, the largest blooms of algae detected in the James in several years are spreading as a lack of precipitation and higher-than-normal temperatures combine to produce ideal conditions for the organisms. “Typically the biggest blooms are in July and August,” said Paul Bukaveckas, an ecologist with Virginia Commonwealth University. “Whereas here we saw the bloom expanding through September and continuing to grow.” That pattern is out of the ordinary for a region where September usually ushers in cooler temperatures and several inches of rain. But it may become more common as climate change drives temperatures upward and makes weather more erratic. “Higher temperatures and less consistent precipitation patterns driven by climate change are making extreme weather like droughts more prevalent around the world, and Virginia is no exception,” Secretary of Natural Resources Matthew J. Strickler said in a drought watch advisory issued by Gov. Ralph Northam on Oct. 11.

Mountain Valley Pipeline agrees to pay Virginia \$2.15 million for environmental violations (Friday) Virginia and Mountain Valley Pipeline have resolved a lawsuit brought by the state against the company for environmental violations that caused significant erosion in the southwestern part of the commonwealth, with the natural gas pipeline developer agreeing to pay a \$2.15 million civil penalty. The payment was described by Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring as “one of the most significant financial penalties ever imposed in Virginia for this kind of case.” Under the terms of the consent decree, the Henrico Circuit Court, where Virginia’s original suit was filed, assumes supervision of Mountain Valley Pipeline’s compliance with state environmental laws, a move that broadens the range of consequences the company will face in the event of violations. Among other provisions, the agreement also requires Mountain Valley Pipeline to remediate prior violations and conduct, at the company’s own expense, ongoing monitoring of erosion and impacts to fisheries and wildlife within the construction area. All work must be further reviewed by independent third-party auditors. Notably, the agreement leaves the door open for the state to impose further fines for future violations and to assess those penalties through “an expedited process.”

VIRGINIA PUBLIC RADIO

Just How Far Should the Freedom of Information Act Go? Public money is often handed over in the form of grants. But, there’s a debate about how much of that process should be public information.

CHARLOTTESVILLE DAILY PROGRESS

OPINION/LETTER: Wind turbines are big killers of birds

A recent letter expressed concern over bird population decreases, which were linked partly to light pollution killing the insects on which they feed (“Light pollution adds to bird loss,” The Daily Progress, Oct. 5). Meanwhile, the disgraceful slaughter of millions of birds by the whirling blades of renewable energy wind turbines has been widely documented. One proposed remedy is even to increase lighting — UV lighting — of these bird killers. Turbines also kill bats. Bat deaths are particularly pertinent, as they remove a natural predator of mosquitoes carrying the agents of numerous human diseases. Here are just a few quotes on the issue: » “A research review published in January of this year found that wind turbines are, by far, the largest cause of mass

bat mortality around the world.” » “Wind turbines kill an estimated 140,000 to 328,000 birds each year in North America, making it the most threatening form of green energy.” » “In 2012 the National Science Foundation awarded a \$150,000 grant to researchers who showed that UV lighting could be used to deter bats and birds from wind farm sites.”

LYNCHBURG NEWS AND ADVANCE

In search of the James River spinymussel Last week, 13 students donned waders and bent over scopes, peering beneath the surface of the Pedlar River for a tiny hole in the mud that might reveal the location of an endangered freshwater mussel. The University of Lynchburg students are enrolled in Dave Perault's conservation ecology class. He takes students outdoors to learn about possible vocations in the environmental field. The students found a handful of two common varieties before finally scoring one James River spinymussel, the first time Perault's class has found one. The spinymussel is a federally endangered species that hasn't been found in the James River since the 1960s, but has survived in some cleaner tributaries, like the Pedlar

MISCELLANEOUS

GREENWIRE / E&E NEWS

How much is a human life worth? The agency has an answer EPA puts a price on human life. For 19 years, the agency has maintained a figure to judge whether its regulations for air and water are worth the incremental health benefits that help people live a little longer by reducing their exposure to pollution. In the Byzantine and bureaucratic language of the federal government, your life is valued at about \$9 million. Past officials who have worked with it agree it's not an exact science. "There is an endless debate about whether it is just a purely absurd and unethical thing to do, and on any day, you or I could argue both sides," said Rob Wolcott, a former deputy assistant administrator for policy who was one of EPA's senior economists for decades. But Wolcott said that if public health safeguards aren't assigned a dollar value, they risk failing to be directly compared with other (just as complicated) inputs in the rulemaking process, like how much it would cost industry to comply with regulations. That could mean they're excluded altogether. "When push comes to shove, in this town, over time, if you don't assign a monetary value to it, then that value functionally becomes zero," he said. The value EPA assigns to a unit of avoided mortality is one of the highest in the world. Its so-called value of statistical life, or VSL, of about \$9 million dwarfs estimates used by the medical and legal professions to judge the cost-effectiveness of certain treatments for a given patient, or damages awarded in a wrongful death lawsuit. It's an order of magnitude higher than the VSLs used by the World Bank to value reduced mortality risk in poor countries.

U.S. generates \$1.3T via 'green' economy — study The U.S.-based "green" economy generates more than \$1.3 trillion annually and employs roughly 4% of the U.S. workforce, according to new research from University College London. In a **study** published today in the journal *Palgrave Communications*, authors Lucien Georgeson and Mark Maslin posited that the continued expansion of green jobs in the United States suggests developing policies centered on the green economy could be the key to extending economic growth. The new research could make its way into discussions about where the U.S. should bank its economic future, as a measure to bolster renewable energy jobs. "The economic case for driving economic growth and job creation

through fossil fuels has weakened based on the employment estimates in fossil fuels, and there are genuine risks of stranded assets," the authors of the report wrote in their conclusion. Measuring the United States' green economy is notoriously difficult: Congress has voted against streamlining and unifying data collection from the relevant industries since 2013, the last time the Bureau of Labor Statistics had meaningful green economy data. Government agencies put out their own workforce data, but many attempts to incorporate estimates of privately run workforces based on those numbers haven't relied on much more than speculation. To build a more reliable green economy data set, Georgeson and Maslin collected information about sales revenue and employment from hundreds of private companies across 24 economic subsectors they determined to be the elements of a low-carbon, efficient and socially inclusive economy.

Pentagon inspector general to review PFAS concerns

The Pentagon's internal watchdog has committed to reviewing the Department of Defense's use of toxic chemicals at military sites. The evaluation comes after Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.), along with about 30 lawmakers of a bipartisan task force, sent a July 25 letter to the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General asking for a review of DOD's response to the highly toxic chemicals linked to water contamination near many military bases. The military uses per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, in firefighting foam because of its effectiveness in putting out diesel fires. But studies have linked PFAS to health problems such as thyroid issues and some cancers. "We reviewed your July request and decided to initiate an evaluation related to PFAS concerns," Michael Zola, the Pentagon's assistant inspector general for legislative affairs and communications, wrote to lawmakers in an Oct. 7 letter. The letter does not provide details on the scope of the evaluation, but it does say the IG will reveal the results of the review by January of next year. The July letter from lawmakers sought specific answers from investigators such as when DOD knew PFAS presented a health risk to humans and when the agency will phase out the use of PFAS in firefighting foam. The letter also expressed frustration with the military's pace on addressing the chemicals. "The DoD is currently tracking at least 401 sites with potential PFAS contamination, but it has only taken mitigation steps at 32 sites," lawmakers wrote, adding, "We are concerned about the public health impact of PFAS on not only service members and their families living on or near military bases, but also on citizens in surrounding communities." Lawmakers have tried to pressure the military to phase out PFAS in firefighting foam with an amendment in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act.

JEWELL, ENVIROS PRESS BUSINESSES TO TAKE THE LEAD

EPA REVERSES COURSE ON REFINERY EXEMPTIONS

Deputy EPA air chief takes job in academia

Justices reject 2 state challenges to federal energy action

PG&E says winds damaged 100 places in its system

Here's how building-sized blankets can save homes

Fire-protection blankets can help safeguard homes and buildings from short-term wildfire exposure, according to a new study. The research, published today in the journal *Frontiers in Mechanical Engineering*, examines the use of structure wraps to protect buildings in the wildland-urban interface, areas where homes and wildlands meet. "I want to contribute to reducing the damage from wildfires," said Fumiaki Takahashi, the author of the study and a professor in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Case Western Reserve University. The blanket technology can prevent structures from igniting by blocking firebrands from entering homes through gutters, eaves, vents, broken windows and roofs. The blankets can also keep homes from making direct contact with flames from surrounding combustibles, such as vegetation and mulch, according to the study.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toxic PCBs linger in schools; EPA, lawmakers fail to act MONROE, Wash. (AP) — At first, teachers at Sky Valley Education Center simply evacuated students and used fans to clear the air when the fluorescent lights caught fire or smoked with noxious fumes. When black oil dripped onto desks and floors, they caught leaks with a bucket and duct-taped oil-stained carpets. Then came the tests that confirmed their suspicions about the light ballasts "Sure enough ... it was PCB oil," said Cynthia Yost, who was among teachers who sent pieces of carpet and classroom air filters to a lab. Tests found elevated levels of the toxic chemicals, used as coolant in the decades-old ballasts that regulated electrical current to the lamps. Millions of fluorescent light ballasts containing PCBs probably remain in schools and day care centers across the U.S. four decades after the chemicals were banned over concerns that they could cause cancer and other illnesses. Many older buildings also have caulk, ceiling tiles, floor adhesives and paint made with PCBs, which sometimes have been found at levels far higher than allowed by law. Yet the Environmental Protection Agency has not attempted to determine the scope of PCB contamination or assess potential health risks, in large part because of lack of funding, political pressure and pushback from industry and education groups, according to dozens of interviews and thousands of pages of documents examined by The Associated Press

Firefighting foam leaves toxic legacy in drinking water near military bases (Oct. 10, Thurs.) SACRAMENTO, Calif. — It was a Sunday tradition at Bethany Slavic Missionary Church. After morning services, Florin Ciuriuc joined the line of worshippers waiting to fill their jugs with gallons of free drinking water from a well on the property, a practice church leaders had encouraged. "I take it for my office every week," said Ciuriuc, a 50-year-old Romanian immigrant and a founding member of the largely Russian-speaking church, which claims 7,000 congregants. Church leaders boasted it was the cleanest water in Sacramento, according to Ciuriuc. In fact, test results showed the water contained toxic chemicals from firefighting foam used for decades on a now-shuttered Air Force base a mile away. Church leaders say they did not understand their well was contaminated. The church's well is one of thousands of water sources located on and near military bases polluted with chemicals from the foam, which was used by the armed services since the 1960s. Defense Department officials know that the chemicals, called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, have seeped into the groundwater underneath nearly two dozen military bases throughout the state.

WILLIAMSON DAILY NEWS

Miller announces \$8.7 million in economic development grant WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congresswoman Carol Miller (R-WV) has announced 10 POWER grants totaling \$8,743,469 from the Appalachian Regional Commission, according to a press release. Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization, or POWER grants, are used to help communities affected by job losses in coal mining as a result of America's changing energy market. "This a huge step in rebuilding Southern West Virginia after the previous administrations 'War on Coal,'" Miller SAID. "Diversifying our economy and supporting entrepreneurs will ensure we find the most innovative ways to continue moving forward to create new jobs, increase small business growth and keep hard-working West Virginians employed." * \$1,500,000 to the Pikeville Medical Center in Pikeville, Kentucky, for the PMC Children Hospital program. The funds will be used to build a \$6.2 million children's hospital and pediatric clinic. The hospital will provide family healthcare, create 50 permanent jobs and retain over 100 pediatric staff. Local sources will add an additional \$7,492,216, bringing the project total to \$8,992,216. *\$1,039,500 to Appalachian Community Capital for Opportunity Appalachia. * \$50,000 to the Wayne County Economic Development Authority to create jobs and businesses in recycling, trucking, logistics and manufacturing across West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky.

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